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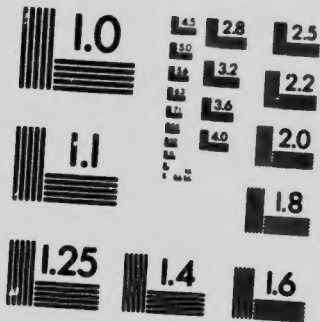
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An Agricultural Policy for Canada

MEMORANDUM JOINTLY CONCURRED IN BY REPRESENTATIVES OF AGRICULTURAL AND MANUFACTURING INTERESTS, MEETING IN CONFERENCE IN WINNIPEG.

On Tuesday, November 3rd, 1914, representatives of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, the United Farmers of Alberta and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, met in conference at the Royal Alexandra Hotel, Winnipeg, for the primary purpose of discussing ways and means for increasing Canadian production, and for the secondary purpose of bringing about, if possible, a larger measure of co-operation between agricultural and manufacturing interests. The statement which follows sets forth the conclusions unanimously reached by the Conference after three days' deliberation, together with a brief resume of the principal reasons upon which those conclusions were based.

This meeting, comprised of representatives from Canada's two greatest industries—agriculture and manufacturing—deems it expedient to issue the following statement as a record of the conclusions to which it has been led as the result of its deliberations.

The thought uppermost in the minds of us all, the issue transcending all else in importance, is the war. Upon that we have but one opinion to express, one determination to record—the Empire must win, the Empire shall win!

We recognize, of course, that success may not be easy of attainment. We recognize that it will call for conscientious effort, for real sacrifices, both national and individual, and on behalf of our respective industries we pledge ourselves that those efforts shall be put forth, that those sacrifices shall be suffered, ere we will submit to the triumph of tyranny and injustice.

As the struggle proceeds it is becoming more and more apparent that it will be a struggle of resources. We must not close our eyes to the possibility that even the last shilling may turn the tide as between defeat and victory. Such being the case, it is no more than Canada's duty, and the duty of all her citizens, to utilize to the utmost the bountiful resources with which we have been blessed. We rejoice in the fact that we have contributed, and will continue to contribute, men, but we rejoice still more in the fact that it lies within our power to feed and in other ways to minister to the wants of those who are fighting the Empire's battles. The responsibility of increasing our production rests heavily upon us, and to that problem our best energies must necessarily be directed.

But in turning with grateful hearts to the performance of this duty we have no desire to make a virtue of necessity. Apart altogether from the exigencies of the war, a substantial increase of our production, on a sound economic basis, is not only a desirable but an essential step at the present stage of our development. In the majority of our undertakings, whether national, provincial, municipal or private, our policy for years past has been to build for the future. In this process of building we have been inspired by an unbounded confidence in the future of our country. Nothing that has happened, nothing that will happen, can ever disturb that confidence or show it to have been unjustified. We recognize the fact, however, that we have financed our undertakings very largely on borrowed capital, upon which interest charges have been rapidly accumulating. We also recognize the fact that for years the balance of trade has been steadily against us. The obligations thus incurred have heretofore been partially met by

increased borrowings, but the time has now arrived when we must endeavor to meet them, not by incurring new and larger obligations, not by striving for that fictitious wealth which finds its basis in speculation, but by devoting our energies to the creation of that real wealth which comes from profitable production.

The problem before us naturally lends itself to consideration under two heads, according as we seek to turn our resources and our capabilities to immediate account, or according as we endeavor to provide ourselves with a broad, comprehensive plan for the full and symmetrical development of all our resources, looking to the future to bring us our best rewards.

Immediate results are, of course, a desideratum, providing they are profitable results — not otherwise. If it were merely a question of increasing our production without regard to economic gain or economic loss, our problem might resolve itself into the bringing of a larger area of land under cultivation. That we could do without delay. But would it necessarily profit us?

The cultivation of any land is of benefit to a nation only as those who perform that labor are able to thrive, are able to achieve not simply an existence, but a measure of independence. They thrive when, under normal conditions, they are able to sell their crop at a price substantially in advance of their cost of producing it. They exist so long as there is any margin between the price they realize and their cost of production. They cease to be an asset and become a liability to the country when, under normal conditions, the price their crop brings is less than what it has cost them to produce it.

The bringing of larger areas under cultivation would be a step in the direction of increasing our wealth, only provided those who would engage in this work were able to farm the land at a profit to themselves. Moreover, that profit would need to rest on a stable basis, so that its existence, its continuity, would be assured for the normal times that will be resumed when the war is over. Any "back-to-the-land" movement that has for its object the taking of temporary profits made possible by the present era of high prices must be followed by a reaction as soon as the opportunity for unusual profits disappears. The net result to Canada of such a movement would seem to be questionable unless those who were recruited to its ranks were men of experience and ascertained competency in agricultural methods. Evidence is not lacking that many who have spent their lives in agriculture are failing to receive a fair return for their labor, due to the prevalence of conditions which should be, and can be, but which have not yet been rectified. Such being the case, we believe it to be the part of wisdom to concentrate our efforts towards the formulation of a plan that will provide a solid and permanent foundation for agricultural prosperity, rather than run any risk of settling a larger number of people in an occupation that they may soon find unprofitable, or at least unattractive.

In our opinion, however, there are results, possible of immediate attainment, towards which we should strive. Without attempting in any way to deal exhaustively with this aspect of the problem, we would point out two things only for the purpose of illustration.

In portions of our western Provinces to-day there are thousands of immature hogs, whose owners have lost, or largely lost, the crops that were to have provided the feed needed to prepare those hogs for market. Local prices for feed have advanced to a point where it will not pay to purchase it. Unless something is done, and done at once, a valuable asset will be lost to Canada at the very time when other parts of the country, where feed is more plentiful, are complaining of a shortage of hogs. The obvious solution of bringing feed to the hogs, or hogs to the feed, is inoperative because of freight rates and the lack of a proper system of distribution. What is to be done?

In the Province of Ontario to-day there are thousands of barrels of first-class apples that may never be harvested, because, it is alleged, it will not pay the farmers to pick them. Yet the Canadian west is crying out for apples it would be glad to buy in carloads at prices that should be remunerative to the producer. Again it may be pertinently asked, cannot something be done?

A complete survey of the situation would disclose many instances pointing to a threatened extinguishment of agricultural assets which under proper organization might easily be conserved. The minimizing of economic waste should be the particular care of our Governments. Especially



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at a time like the present, when all our resources should be utilized to the fullest extent in strengthening us for the world struggle in which we are engaged, should such problems be given close and careful study by those who could provide the necessary relief. We gladly record our appreciation of what has been done in this direction, both by our Federal and our Provincial authorities, but we would most strongly urge that they immediately co-operate in redoubled efforts to conserve and to bring to early fruition, in all parts of the Dominion, any potential asset which an exhaustive survey of the field may show to be in need of assistance.

Dealing with the question of a permanent policy, we are unanimously of the opinion that something should, something must, be done to make life upon the farm more attractive in all its aspects. If, as is generally admitted, agriculture lies at the very foundation of our national prosperity, it should be our duty, no less than our privilege, as Canadians, to see that those who make this occupation their life work are surrounded by conditions that will make for their material welfare, their social happiness, and the proper education of their children.

The vista of possibilities comprised in these few words is enormous. Obviously, in the scope of a brief statement such as this, it will be impossible to do more than indicate a few of the points which a broad-based constructive policy of agricultural aid should embrace.

First, and perhaps foremost, there is a pressing need for more technical instruction, not so much that kind of instruction which a farmer can obtain only by going to an agricultural school or to an agricultural college; not so much that kind of instruction that is given from the platform at meetings of farmers' institutes or of grain growers, but the kind of practical instruction that is brought to the farmer on his own farm, the kind of instruction that will result, for example, in the growing of two blades of grass where but one grew before. To provide such instruction, that will in all cases be adapted to the peculiar needs of each community, will call for thorough organization and liberal expenditures of money.

Next, there is an urgent need for improved methods of distribution, both of the supplies which enter into the everyday requirements upon the farm and of the produce which the farmer has prepared for market. Agriculture must necessarily lose whatever attraction it possesses if the tendency is for materials of all kinds to advance in price side by side with a diminishing return for the product of farm labor. The decadence which agriculture has suffered in certain districts can, we believe, be shown to have been due very largely to this cause. It should not be difficult to devise a remedy. A good deal has already been done by the farmers themselves; a great deal more remains to be done. Thorough organization, the application of modern business methods, and the widespread extension of the parcel post system would speedily effect a revolution in Canadian agriculture. The call is for able and public-spirited men to study the situation, to prepare the plan and to put it into operation.

Another of the needs is for better and cheaper transportation from the farm to the ultimate market. Embraced under this heading is the problem of good roads, the problem of shipping and receiving facilities, the problem of rail rates and the problem of water rates. To arrive at an intelligent understanding of any of these would call for weeks of careful study; to devise and to apply the proper remedy would be a matter perhaps of years. Again the question arises: Who is to do it, and how is it to be financed?

In this connection it is but fitting that we should acknowledge with gratefulness the generous spirit with which the railroad companies have responded to appeals for relief in specific instances. With their help many a difficult situation has been successfully tided over, and we trust that friendly co-operation may long continue to characterize the relations of farming and transportation interests.

Cheaper money, or easier credit, is another requisite, if agriculture, particularly in Western Canada, is to afford a return commensurate with the labor that is spent upon it. Very frequently the reason that more advantage is not taken of the opportunities which agriculture presents is, not that the farmer is not alive to those opportunities, but that he lacks the means and is unable to obtain the credit necessary to profit by them. It would also appear desirable to modify the present practice of insisting that payments shall fall due immediately after the harvesting of a crop, for it frequently compels sacrifices which the farmer can ill afford. Neither of these reforms is likely to be accomplished by individual effort. Some improvement might be

effected through organized effort. A great deal of much-needed relief could be afforded through the intervention of some properly constituted authority clothed with the necessary power.

To whatever extent the tariff is responsible for the handicaps under which the farmer has to labor, it should be carefully studied with a view to its rectification. If the lack of educational facilities in rural communities is a factor in depopulating our farms, these facilities should be provided wherever possible and as conveniently as possible.

In brief, we return to the broad ground from which we set out,—that life upon the farm in all its aspects must be made more attractive.

The deliberations of a meeting such as this would be incomplete if they did not result in something more than a definition of a few of the underlying weaknesses that stand in the way of our proper agricultural development. These weaknesses must be more fully studied, and some machinery must be provided for their correction. The whole future of Canada, her attainment of the destiny which we believe awaits her as one of the first nations of the world, not only suggests but demands that her citizens as a whole apply themselves to this all-important problem.

We therefore place ourselves firmly on record as of the opinion that these and all other matters affecting the agricultural interests of Canada, particularly production, transportation, distribution, markets and finance, be made forthwith the subject of a searching investigation by a committee or board to be appointed, in accordance with the best British practice, with the least possible delay by the Federal Government, that committee or board to be comprised of non-partisan men of outstanding ability, broad experience, high ideals and unquestioned probity, for the purpose, first, of thoroughly acquainting themselves with the needs which exist; second, of evolving and submitting to the Government in time for report to the approaching session of the Parliament of Canada a plan calculated to meet those needs, and, third, of putting that plan when approved or amended into execution, with power to act in matters of urgent need with Government approval only.

Anticipating favorable action herein, we pledge ourselves, jointly and individually, to facilitate the work of the committee or board to the best of our ability, and we are empowering and instructing Messrs. Maharg, Henders, Tregillus, Sherrard and Cantley to strike committees for the fuller investigation of these matters on our own account, these committees to report to a future conference of agricultural, manufacturing, financial and transportation interests, to meet on the call of our Chairman, Mr. Henderson.

On behalf of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association,—

R. C. HENDERS (President),
J. S. WOOD (Vice-President),
R. MCKENZIE (Secretary, Canadian Council of Agriculture),
T. A. CRERAR (President, Grain Growers' Grain Company),
G. F. CHIPMAN (Editor, Grain Growers' Guide),
W. H. ENGLISH,
FRANK SIMPSON,
R. J. AVISON,
R. M. WILSON.

On behalf of the United Farmers of Alberta,—

W. J. TREGILLUS (President),
P. P. WOODBRIDGE (Secretary),
RICE SHEPPARD,
E. J. FREAM.

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association,—

J. A. MAHARG (President, Canadian Council of Agriculture),
F. W. GREEN (Hon. Secretary),
J. B. MUSSELMAN (Secretary),
A. G. HAWKES,
JOHN F. REID,
CHAS. A. DUNNING (Manager, Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Co.).

On behalf of the Canadian Manufacturers Association,—

E. G. HENDERSON (President),
J. H. SHERRARD (Vice-President),
THOS. CANTLEY,
T. R. DEACON (Mayor of Winnipeg),
H. BRUCE GORDON,
G. M. MURRAY (Secretary),
G. F. C. POUSSETTE (Assist. Secretary).

